



## BRIEFING PAPER

**LOCATION:** Southwestern Region  
**DATE:** July 13, 2004  
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**ISSUE:** Process used by the Communities in the White Mountains to produce the "Community Wildfire Protection Plan for At Risk Communities of the Sitgreaves National Forest within Apache, Coconino and Navajo Counties.

**DISCUSSION:** The collaborative process for developing the Sitgreaves Community Wildfire Protection Plan (SCWPP) has its roots in the White Mountains Natural Resource Working Group (NRWG). The NRWG was formalized in 1997 by intergovernmental agreement between federal, state and county governments and was chartered to create a collaborative process for open debate of innovative approaches to ecosystem health, including the role of fire in the ecosystem. Subsequent to Congressional approval of the HFRA, the NRWG focused on developing a CWPP as a means of describing the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), components of wildland fire risk and how to mitigate risk within the WUI.

In March of this year the Board of Supervisors from Apache, Coconino and Navajo Counties, the City of Show Low and the Town of Pinetop/Lakeside approved a Scope of Work authorizing participation in a Working Group that was chartered to complete a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for all of the communities at risk from catastrophic wildfire in the Sitgreaves National Forest.

To create a single CWPP that captured local interest and advanced understanding regarding the critical issues across the Sitgreaves National Forest, two Community Action Groups (CAGs) were established—one in the eastern portion of the planning area and one in the west. The first CAG was to focus on the at-risk communities of Vernon, McNary, Hon Dah, Pinetop-Lakeside, Show Low, Linden, and Clay Springs-Pinedale. A second CAG was established to focus on the at-risk communities of Aripine, Heber-Overgaard, and Forest Lakes.

This SCWPP describes the boundary of the WUI for the communities, the factors for determining risk, located the areas of high, medium and low risk and prioritized areas for land treatments, agreed on the type of fuel reduction treatments to be applied, as well as needed public outreach and education and recommendations for fire prevention and support for local wood products industry.



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Not only unique in timing but also in complexity. The SCWPP has been agreed upon by Apache, Coconino and Navajo Counties, a total of nine communities, eight fire districts with the Arizona State Forester, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the A-S National Forests Supervisor concurrence of the SCWPP. The SCWPP was actually completed in a little more than 60 days.

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